

ROMAN RESEARCH PAPER

CREATING AN OUTLINE

The outline is an important early step of the research process, after you have selected your topic and done some initial research, but before you dive in to note taking. The outline provides focus during research and organization in the final product.

What does an outline do?

- It provides **structure** for the paper.
- It makes **relationships** among main ideas and supporting evidence visible.
- It **changes!** Keep revising the outline as you research so that it reflects new ideas, connections and improvements, while it gets rid of ideas you cannot support. In this way the outline also **guides your research**, letting you know what areas need more evidence and which are already well supported.

Sample Outline

Here is a sample outline. It is a skeleton to be filled in as research continues. Each heading, indicated by a Roman numeral, will have evidence or examples below it that prove the heading is correct. These are called subheadings. There must be two or more pieces of evidence for each supporting topic.

- I. Introduction
 - A. general information about ancient Rome
 - B. basic information about the more specific topic
 - C. thesis statement
- II. Body paragraph topic 1
 - A. Subheading
 - 1. Specific evidence, example, or detail
 - 2. Specific evidence, example, or detail
 - a. more specific evidence
 - b. more specific evidence
 - B. Subheading
 - 1. Specific evidence, example, or detail
 - 2. Specific evidence, example, or detail
- III. Conclusion
 - A. Restate topic statement
 - B. How is it relevant to today?
 - C. Why should your reader care?

You can add more levels to your subheadings as you do research to find more information. If you feel like you have too much evidence, you can split it into new, more specific subheadings.

Remember, your outline should be regularly changing as you do research, and even while you are writing your paper! It is finished only when the final paper is finished.

Points to Remember

1. Look for examples, facts, statistics, details and quotations within your heading and subheading topics. The outline will guide the researcher to look for specific information needed to support the major topics listed in the headings with Roman numerals.
2. During research, the outline may reveal that headings should be divided into subheadings if a significant amount of information is found supporting heading topic. In that case, the outline should be changed to reflect the new way the researcher wants to group the information.
3. The number of major topic headings (each one will become a body paragraph) needed is not fixed, but three is the minimum and more are common. Add another major topic heading or subheading as needed.
4. The number of subheadings is flexible, but you should have at least two under any given major supporting topic.
5. Strive for logic, consistency, and completeness. This includes in numbering and indenting so that they reflect the relationships between the ideas: the headings are the chief proof that your topic is meaningful, and the supporting subtopics provide evidence and proof in the form of facts, quotations, statistics, and examples.
6. The outline is the barebones, tentative plan for how the paper will be and does not need to include full sentences. The final outline reflects the changes that occurred in thinking as research progressed, and reflects the exact structure of the final product.

An Example

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| I. Introduction | Sports Injury Research in
Chapel Hill, NC |
| A. Background – safety of
professional football | B. |
| B. Topic: Professional football
is a violent game that
causes serious injury | IV. Knee and leg injuries |
| II. Head Injuries | A. |
| A. injuries to quarterbacks | B. |
| 1. example a | V. Conclusion |
| 2. example b | A. restate topic statement |
| B. injuries to other players | B. relevance today |
| III. Shoulder and Spinal Cord Injuries | |
| A. Dr. Robert Cantu, National
Center for Catastrophic | |